

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 12, 15, and 16 were pending in this application. Claims 12, 15, and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over the combination of U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2006/0106649 to Eggers et al. ("Eggers"), U.S. Pat. No. 7,117,041 to Engleson et al. ("Engleson") and U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2002/0077852 to Ford et al. ("Ford"). Claim 12 has been hereby amended to more clearly point out the patentable aspects of the present invention and to overcome the rejections set forth in the Office Action. No new matter has been added. Thus, claims 12, 15, and 16 are currently pending.

Embodiments of the present invention can include a method for tracking a portable medical device using both a medication management computer and a portable user access device. A user seeking to find a lost medical device can determine the last known location of the medical device through interaction with the medication management computer. The user can then travel to that last known location with the portable access device. If there are multiple medical devices located at the location such that the user cannot readily identify the device being sought, the user can cause the access device to send a signal to the medication management computer which in turn can send a signal to the sought after medical device to activate an audible alarm. This allows hospital personnel to quickly and efficiently locate a variety of hospital equipment that may have been misplaced.

Amended claim 12 is not obvious over the combination of Eggers, Engleson and Ford because these references fail to establish prima facie obviousness. Unlike the claimed invention, Engleson discloses a system capable of tracking medical devices where the last known location of a particular medical device is displayed on a stationary computer at a nurse station. Engleson at col. 10, lines 45-67. Engleson teaches, "The status of that equipment can be easily ascertained

from a remote video terminal, such as the video display connected to the nursing CPU.” Engleson at col. 10, lines 59-61. Conversely, amended claim 12 requires “displaying the last known general physical location of the medical device at a portable user access device.” There is nothing in Eggers or Ford that teaches or suggests this limitation either. Accordingly, the cited references fail to teach or suggest every element of amended claim 12 and Applicants respectfully request the rejection of this claim be withdrawn.

Also in contrast to the claimed invention, Ford merely discloses an audible alarm attached to a medical device. Ford at ¶[0126]. There is nothing in Ford that teaches or suggests using the audible alarm to identify or locate the medical device it is attached to. Furthermore, Eggers and Engleson merely disclose systems for tracking the location of various pieces of medical equipment. See Eggers at ¶¶[0056]-[0058]; Engleson at col. 10, lines 45-67. Eggers and Engleson are entirely silent as to how a user of the systems disclosed therein might actually find a specific medical device at a particular location. Conversely, amended claim 12 requires “transmitting a request audio location alarm message from the user access device to the medication management unit ... transmitting an order audio locator alarm message from the medication management unit to the medical device; and ... activating and emitting a locator alarm at the then current and specific physical location of the medical device without regard for proximity to the user access device and current visibility status of the medical device.” There is nothing in any of the cited references that teaches or suggests these limitations. Accordingly, the cited references fail to establish prima facie obviousness and Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of amended claim 12 be withdrawn. Claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 12 and are allowable for the reasons outlined above.

CONCLUSION

Applicants request entry of the present amendments and examination of the pending claims in view thereof. Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee deficiency, or credit any overpayments, to Deposit Account No. 50-3118. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite allowance of the present claims and application.

A timely and favorable response on the merits of the claims as amended is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,
Geoffrey N. Holland et al.

Customer No. 41155

Hospira, Inc.
Telephone: (224) 212-2889
Facsimile: (224) 212-2088

/MRC/
Michael R. Crabb
Registration No. 37,298
Attorney for Applicants